UNITED
NATIONS

ST

Secretariat

ST/SGB/272
9 August 1994

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

To: Members of the staff

Subject: SECURITY OF INFORMATION*

1. Most United Nations information is available to the Member States, managers and staff of the Organization and the general public. This is consistent with the Organization's commitment to transparency in the way that its business is undertaken. However, the United Nations functions in a number of areas, most particularly in peace-keeping and peacemaking, political affairs and in all matters related to the security of personnel and installations, in which absolute confidentiality and discretion are essential.

2. All staff members are required, under staff regulation 1.5, to "exercise the utmost discretion in regard to all matters of official business. They shall not communicate to any person any information known to them by reason of their official position that has not been made public, except in the course of their duties or by authorization of the Secretary-General. Nor shall they at any time use such information to private advantage. These obligations do not cease upon separation from the Secretariat."

3. I appreciate that the great majority of staff members are both aware of these provisions and respect them. However, I want to remind all staff of their obligations in regard to security of information under the staff regulations, and their personal responsibility for the proper protection of information which they may be called upon to handle in the course of their duties. Heads of department or mission are responsible for ensuring the safe custody of sensitive information communicated to them, and for ensuring that appropriate security measures are in place to protect vulnerable communications links, such as telephone or facsimile equipment and computer systems.

* Personnel Manual index No. 1060.

4. Guidelines and standards for transmitting and protecting sensitive information entrusted to or originating from the United Nations will shortly be issued. In the meantime, all responsible officials should review existing arrangements within their department or office to ensure that all staff understand the need for the utmost discretion and that appropriate security measures are in place.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI
Secretary-General